



**Statement on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) from
Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, President of The John A. Hartford Foundation**

June 10, 2016 (*New York, NY*) – Reflecting on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day coming up on June 15, Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, president of The John A. Hartford Foundation and a researcher and authority on elder mistreatment and abuse, offers the following statement:

“Elder mistreatment is a common and even deadly problem but it all too frequently goes undiagnosed and unreported. An estimated one in ten older Americans suffer elder mistreatment, which we define as physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, or abandonment.

“As World Elder Abuse Awareness Day approaches, we are grateful to the [International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse](#) and the [World Health Organization](#) at the United Nations for organizing this crucial opportunity for all of us to increase our vigilance.

“In particular, health care, emergency services, social service, and law enforcement professionals, who are on the front lines, should use every interaction with an older person to screen for possible mistreatment. One simple yet powerful way to do this is by asking the question: ‘Are you safe at home?’

“Especially for older people who may be isolated, frail, cognitively impaired, or who may rarely get a chance to communicate outside the company of their abuser, these are important opportunities that cannot be missed.

“Elder mistreatment is a serious public health issue, and merits the same level of response as child abuse or domestic abuse.

“This problem has been the focus of my research and writing for many years and I have seen encouraging progress, but we have more to do. In particular,

- Congress must appropriate full funding for the newly reauthorized Older Americans Act, to increase prevention, screening, and training, including in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.
- We should expand support for the Department of Justice’s efforts to train prosecutors on elder mistreatment and financial exploitation.
- We need more research on best practices for clinical prevention, detection, and screening.

“We should be aiming for the best possible quality of life for older adults. Elder mistreatment is its antithesis.”

###

About Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN

Dr. Fulmer is the President of The John A. Hartford Foundation, a private, nonpartisan philanthropy based in New York City and dedicated to improving the care of older adults. She is nationally and internationally recognized as a leading expert in geriatrics and is best known for her research on the topic of elder abuse and neglect, which has been funded by the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute for Nursing Research. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine). To learn more about President Fulmer, please visit www.jhartfound.org/about/staff/terry-fulmer. To learn more about The John A. Hartford Foundation, please visit www.jhartfound.org.

Media contact:

Elliott Walker

ewalker@aboutscp.com

917.846.6334